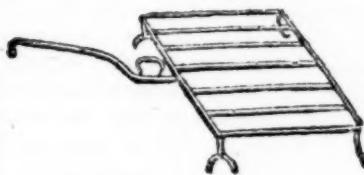


# COBBETT'S WEEKLY POLITICAL REGISTER.

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## MR. COBBETT'S SPEECH,

*At the Theatre of the Mechanics' Institute, at a Meeting of the RADICAL REFORM SOCIETY, on Monday, the 7th of September, 1829.*

[The motion offered to the Meeting, was in the following words: "That an Address be presented by this Society to the People of England, calling upon them for their co-operation with this Society in the cause of Radical Reform." This motion was made by a young man named HAND; and seconded by Mr. Cobbett in a speech: the following expresses (as far as the speaker can do it without being able to recur to any notes, except as to some of the facts) the substance of that speech, which, on account of the very interesting nature of a part of the matter, it is deemed proper to put upon record in this place.]

### GENTLEMEN,

THE object of this motion, which I deem it an honour to be permitted to second, is to obtain the sanction of your approbation in favour of presenting an address to the people of England, calling upon them to join this Society in its endeavours to obtain a Radical Reform. You will please to observe, that the members of the Society themselves were quite competent to the presenting of such an address; but the gentlemen of the committee who have prepared this motion were of opinion (in which opinion I heartily join) that this their endeavour would derive great weight from being backed by your sanction, and that the success of it, of course, would be more likely to be secured. As it has been determined to submit the matter to you, it

seems to be a duty in any one, speaking on this subject before you, to offer his opinion with regard to what ought to be the tone and tenor of such an address; and this duty I shall perform before I sit down.

But before I come to speak of this address, I will, with your indulgence, give what I deem an answer to the speeches recently made at Liverpool, and Manchester, by Mr. Huskisson; because those speeches contain matter tending to confirm us in the opinions and principles which we have here avowed and set forth. This, though, in my mind, a very contemptible individual, has been made of importance by the numerous offices that he has filled, by the power that he has possessed, by the mighty mischiefs that he has done, and by the immense sums of public money that he has received; therefore, his words are worthy of notice; and not on account of their intrinsic merit, or of the character or capacity of the man.

At Liverpool, he lamented the existence of the acknowledged general distress; and said that he should be glad to have the *opinions of practical men amongst his constituents with regard to the cause of this distress, and also with regard to a remedy.* What, gentlemen, a man who has been in office nearly forty years; a man who has, during that time, filled offices in the Treasury, in the paymasters' departments, in the Colonies, and in the department of trade, and who has been, I believe, from ten to fifteen years in the Cabinet itself; a man, moreover, who has received during that time, about one hundred thousand pounds of our money, who has been standing up to his chin in the fruits of our labours; this man, this prince of free trade, who has received an addition to his salary of *two thousand pounds a year* as a reward for having nullified, or, at least, mutilated, three hundred acts of Parliament, containing the accumulated and experimental wisdom of our forefathers, exercised deliberately and cau-

tionsly, with a view to augment our mercantile marine, to ensure the perpetuity of its predominance over that of other nations; and thereby to ensure us also the strength and dominion of our warlike maritime power: what, Gentlemen, this man, thus rewarded out of the fruits of our labour, thus caressed by the un-reformed House of Commons, thus chaunted by the Whig liberals as the statesman *par excellence*; this man, thus bloated with the public money; this man, the representative of the second town of commerce in England, and also the second town of commerce in the world; creeps down to his constituents, and, in the voice of a sick girl, laments the havoc which his measures have spread around, and modestly expresses his readiness to hear the opinions of "*practical men*," not only as to the cause of the ruin, but as to the remedy that ought to be applied. He appears to have escaped but by a hair's breadth from the indignant censure of those constituents, who, if he had not hastened from the spot, were about to treat him to three cheers for the shipping interest, of which it was and is notorious, that he had been the greatest foe that ever lived.

At Manchester, gentlemen, he appears to have recovered himself a little. He was there beyond the hisses of ruined ship-owners. The twisters and weavers of cotton appear not to have remembered that cotton must come and go in ships, and that the purchasers of cotton goods must become less if ship-owners and ship-builders be ruined. At this place he did not affect to deny that the distress was great and general; but he modestly doubted whether it were so great as had been pretended; though, if he had dared to walk out into the streets amongst the starving manufacturers, he might have seen factories enough turned into fortresses, and would have been stunned with the curses of ruined masters and starving men, and of shop-keepers innumerable reduced literally to beggary. If he had dared to go in person, and look upon the once-boasted Manchester, that scene of patient toil, of ingenuity and industry perfectly matchless; if he had dared to go

out into the streets, and take a look at this scene, he must, if he had common humanity and justice in his bosom, have dropped down with shame.

At Manchester he expressed his doubts whether the Government had had any *control* over the cause of the distress. Over the cause of a *part of it*, he said that Government had certainly had no control; but, he added, that if the cause could be removed by the Government, he himself would contribute all in his power to effect that desirable object. What, gentlemen, no control over a part of it! What part of it, I wonder, is there over which he and his late colleagues, and the un-reformed Parliament, have not had absolute control? He would doubtless deny that the free-trade project has tended to produce this distress; but the **CORN BILL**, gentlemen, has that not had a hand in producing this distress? To cause corn to be made dear, or kept dear, while, from his free-trade project, the profit on manufactured goods must necessarily be reduced, and wages necessarily comparatively low: must not the augmenting of the price of the manufacturer's loaf, by one measure of the Government, and by another measure reducing the profits of the master, and the wages of the weaver, spinner, and mechanic: must not these two measures, co-existent and co-operative, have naturally tended to produce the distress at Manchester?

And here, gentlemen, let me give you some account of the conduct of the statesman *par excellence* with regard to the Corn Bill. In the year 1815, when the first Corn Bill was passed (the ports having been for many years open for the importation of corn), Mr. Huskisson, this statesman Mr. Huskisson, was not only in favour of that bill, but was its great supporter. He being then a member for Chichester, and he being, for the part which he took in this business, actually burnt in effigy by the people of the town of Havant, within a few miles of which place was his country seat. Upon this occasion he said, and he said very truly, that *if there were a free trade in corn, while the taxes remained at the height that they then were,*

the landowners and farmers must be utterly ruined, the agricultural labourers reduced to the lowest pitch of misery, misery attendant with consequences the magnitude of which no man could see. He said that gentlemen talked about returning to prices which had existed before the war ; but that the whole of the taxes then amounted to less than fifteen millions a year, that in future the annual taxes must amount to nearer fifty than sixty millions a year ; that, therefore, " my countrymen," said he, " must, as long as this debt and the taxes last, be content to eat dear bread."

Well, then, why did he, the winter before last, urge the crowning of his free trade project with a measure to cause a *free trade in corn!* He had got his two thousand a year in addition to his salary or pensions, as a reward for his having chipped away the substance of the three hundred Acts of Parliament which constituted the wise restrictive system of our forefathers, and then he said that it was necessary to have free trade in corn ; because, without that, his free trade system was *incomplete*. Now, gentlemen, please to mark, no change in the circumstances had taken place since the year 1815. There were still the sixty millions of taxes, including the expense of collection ; there still existed all the grounds upon which the Corn Bill had been passed in 1815 ; the same ruin must still have fallen upon landowners, farmers, and agricultural labourers, and yet this excellent Minister of trade ; and yet this prime economist, who had been loaded with salaries and pensions for his political science and services, wanted, in 1827, or pretended to want, measures for giving us a free trade in corn ; which measures, if they had been adopted, would, at this hour, have made the land desolate. On the 11th of February, 1826, when his free trade treaties first became known to the public in detail, I, in inserting in the Register some of those treaties, made a remark in these words. " We shall have, hereafter, to refer to these treaties, as the source of infinite mischief to Eng-

" land ;" and, indeed, how often was he warned from the outset, of the ruin which must attend these his fatal innovations !

But, gentlemen, government has had no control, does he say ? The unreformed Parliament *has had no control!* Have they had no control over the causes of the present distress ? which presses not upon the land-owner alone : not solely upon the agricultural people ; nor, upon the merchant, the manufacturer, or any other class exclusively ; but which presses upon every soul who is not a receiver of the taxes in some shape or other ; which huddles into one common mass, and crushes, with one common ruin, land-owner, farmer, merchant, manufacturer, shopkeeper, and persons in every class of life ; which has already, with unsparing hand, levelled to the earth hundreds of thousands of industrious, frugal, virtuous, and, heretofore, happy families ; which has, throughout the whole of society, plunged anxious fathers and mothers into despair ; which has rendered every transaction of trade and commerce a game of chance, and which has, as far as this once happy country is concerned, rendered human affairs uncertain, and human life a burden.

No control, gentlemen ! Who was it that contracted this enormous funded debt and dead-weight debt ? Was it not the Government, including that House, the character of which, God willing, we mean to change, or, at least, to use our best legal endeavours to cause to be changed ? When they had contracted the enormous debt, and made the enormous establishments, requiring, in time of peace, taxes to the amount of sixty millions a year ; when they had, at their own will and pleasure, done this, had they no control over the laws that they passed, to raise the value of the money in which the interest of the debt and the establishments were to be paid ? What, no control over their own acts ! Were they, then, involuntary agents ? Were they under the guidance of some all-controlling influence, which they had not the power to resist ? If they were, they still are ; and then, God knows, it is high time that we should endeavour

to take the affair out of their hands. But, gentlemen, they had full control ; they had ample power to do what they liked ; and they were either ignorant of what they were doing, when they were raising the value of money, or they have wittingly and wilfully brought us into our present miserable state.

Gentlemen, people do not in general enough attend to the progress of this ruinous system. The taxes, which could be borne ; with a great deal of difficulty, indeed, but which could be borne when cottons, and woollens, and goods of all sorts, sold for three times their present price, and when wheat was, on an average of years, at fifteen shillings the bushel, became absolutely insupportable when these prices have fallen two-thirds in amount. The nominal amount of the taxes still remains the same, while the people have but just one-third of as much money to pay them with ; the farmer's produce, the shopkeeper's receipts, the wages of the labourer, artizan, and manufacturer, are, if you take into account their loss of time for want of work, as low as they were in the year 1793, before the late war began ; but, we have now to pay sixty millions a year in taxes in place of fifteen ; and this is the real cause of our ruin ; ruin which no time can put a stop to, which no chance circumstances can alleviate ; ruin which must continue to exist and to increase, until put a stop to by measures calculated for the purpose, and which measures Mr. Huskisson is not, be assured, a man to devise. He, modest man, wants the advice and assistance of practical men ; let him, then, give up his salary and his pensions to the practical men, or let him, this day forward, cease his sick-girl-like lamentations, and retire to that country seat which constitutes part of the reward of his brilliant exploits : let him get out of the way of men of sense, and let him for ever hold his tongue.

Gentlemen, when you reflect that sixty millions a year are collected in taxes, and know well that they must come out of the pockets of the people at large ; when you reflect that each of you has now, in consequence of the change

which the Ministry and the unreformed Parliament have made in the value of money, fifteen shillings to pay in tax, instead of the five shillings that you had to pay before, you will cease to wonder at your ruin ; or rather, you will wonder that it is not more complete. Have a little patience, however, for it is very far from having attained its height ; it will go steadily on increasing until it will become wholly insupportable. Having fifteen shillings to pay where you had only five to pay before, and the payment passing through channels so numerous and imperceptible as to elude the most scrutinising eye, the ruin has come on without the cause being perceived by a very large majority of the people. If it were an individual case, you would perceive it at once. If any one of you had contracted to pay a man fifteen shillings on a certain distant day, and if the fifteen shillings consisted of a sort of mean stuff, of which it required the fifteen shillings to purchase a bushel of wheat ; and if, before the day of payment arrived, a law was passed to make every body pay their debts in real shillings in full weight and fineness ; when the day of payment came, you would find that you had three times as much to pay, in reality, as the sum which you had contracted to pay. This, gentlemen, is our case ; this is the cause of our ruin ; this raising of the value of money has plunged hundreds of thousands of most estimable families into misery and despair ; it has blasted industry ; it has filled the country with crime, the natural concomitant of hunger ; it has tied the hands of the labourer and artizan, and made those homes miserable, which were before scenes of delight.

And, gentlemen, has this Government ; has this unreformed House of Commons, have these guardians of the fruits of our earnings, had no control in this affair of raising the value of money ? They have done the whole thing themselves ; it has been their own work exclusively ; the people not only never gave their sanction to the measure, but a large part of them openly protest against it. Nay, not only have the Government done this deed ;

not only have they done this terrible mischief; but they have done it in spite of having been warned at every stage of their fatal progress; in spite of having laid before them the clear and conclusive proof of the destructive tendency of their measures. It was in the year 1818, that this sensible House of Commons began to talk about restoring the money of the country to its ancient value. As swiftly as the remonstrance could be conveyed to them, they were remonstrated with upon the subject. They were not only told that the measure would be dreadfully ruinous; but it was proved to them that it would be so, and proved, too, in a manner sufficient to open the mind and produce conviction in an idiot. Yet, as obstinacy is generally a bedfellow of stupidity, when the next year came (1819), they did the deed; passed an Act to raise the value of money, and, in effect, to triple the amount of the taxes. Having done this, they boasted in strains the most lofty of their grand achievement; but the misery came on so fast, that in 1822 they recoiled with affright from that achievement of which they had bragged so unmercifully in 1819. Still they clung to a part of their folly; and they were again warned of the blowing-up of banks which succeeded in 1826. In this last year they were again warned, in the most solemn manner, of the ruin which would follow their then measure. It was proved to them, that if they persevered in raising the value of money, without greatly reducing the taxes, they would plunge the country into sufferings insupportable. Conceit and arrogance urged them on; they set remonstrance and advice at defiance; and we now have before us the natural and clearly predicted result. And, gentlemen, after all this; all this, as notorious as the sun at noon-day, comes this Mr. HUSKISSON, with his pockets crammed with our money as a reward for his political science, and tells the ruined merchants and manufacturers, and starving artizans, that he doubts whether the Government has had any control over the causes that have produced the distress!

Gentlemen, not only had they the re-

monstrances and advice of which I have been speaking, to assist their judgment; but they had the history of the world; the history of all states, ancient and modern, to guide them. There is hardly a nation in the world, in which it has not happened at times that legislative measures have been necessary to rectify the evils arising from the undue advantage which circumstances have given the creditor over the debtor. In the republic of Athens, (as a friend reminded me the other day,) **SOLON**, when he was chosen for law-giver, found the people distracted on account of the numerous debts due from the land-proprietors, and the industrious classes to the *usurers*; he found the great mass of the people in the depth of misery, arising from this cause. He found fathers and mothers compelled to sell their children in liquidation of their debts; and he found the state itself on the eve of dissolution. He made a law to compel the usurers to give a discharge of the debts upon receiving an equitable portion of payment. He restored peace and tranquillity to the state; trade and commerce returned to their wonted degree of vigour; the republic resumed its ancient spirit and attitude, and the past evils were soon forgotten. **JULIUS CÆSAR**, who, even as a *captain*, was not much inferior to the *Duke of Wellington* himself! **JULIUS CÆSAR**, on taking upon him the consular authority, found the commonwealth plunged into great misery on account of the depreciation which had taken place in the value of money. He found every thing deranged, owing to this cause, and set himself to work to restore things to their former state. **JULIUS CÆSAR**, Gentlemen, did not much resemble, in any thing, the heroes of our Collective; and in this part of his conduct less than in any thing else. Did **JULIUS CÆSAR** pass a law to *raise the value of money*? Yes, **JULIUS CÆSAR** did; but he took care, at the same time, to *lower the nominal amount of the debts*, and to make, in short, an "*equitable adjustment*." Much about the same thing was done in France, in the reign of **Louis the XIV**. The United States of America did the same; and, more recently, the same has been done

by Russia and Austria. The manner of doing the thing has been different in different cases; but in every case, the effect of the measure has been to prevent the debtor from being ruined by the creditor; to prevent the debtor from being robbed by the creditor; to deprive the latter of the power of demanding from the former more than he had, in fact, contracted to pay. Nation after nation, the most upright and most wise in the world have resorted to these means of restoring the happiness of the people; but it was reserved for our matchless Collective, led by that fine young statesman, Mr. Peel, to compel the debtor to pay to the creditor three times as much as he had contracted to pay. And it was reserved for these delightful persons to pretend, after they had done all this mischief, that over the cause of this mischief they had no control!

With regard to our friend Huskisson, however, one thing, at any rate, has been, and unhappily now is, under his control; one thing he can do for us of his own mere motion, namely, give up his pensions, and give us up the hundred thousand pounds of our money which he has received within the last forty years. Until now, it might have seemed just that he should have this money; but now it appears that he is, and has been, totally ignorant of his business; that he has done us mischief, instead of good; caused our ruin, instead of promoting our prosperity; and therefore, now, if he have conscience within him, he will refund the money. What! here is a man who has had his hand in our purses for nearly forty years; has had heaps of our money in payment for his knowledge of our affairs; and who, now, when he sees us in the depth of ruin, asks us how we are to be relieved; and shall we, after this, continue to pay him for his life, and to pay his wife for her life, too, as a mark of our gratitude towards the husband? Yes, gentlemen, we shall continue to pay them both to the end of their lives, and of our lives too, perhaps, unless, by our spirited exertions, and the late returning wisdom and justice of those who have more at

stake than we have, the House at Westminster shall become in reality, as well as in name, the Commons' House of Parliament.

I now come, gentlemen, to the fulfilment of my promise; namely, to offer you, with great submission, my opinion as to what ought to be the *tone and tenor of that address* which, as you have before been informed, it is the intention of the Society to put forth, and to obtain your sanction to which, is the object of the motion which I have the honour to second. All men are now convinced that some great change in the representation of the people is necessary; and, therefore, it is of the greatest importance that we, who are taking the lead in this affair, should neglect nothing within our power to convince the people at large that our efforts do not tend to the producing of that confusion which would put property and life in jeopardy. Our enemies are of two distinct descriptions; those who unjustly live by the fruit of our labour, and who always represent us as designing and disaffected persons, aiming at the total overthrow of property, law, and religion. These enemies are by no means formidable, because all sensible men see into their motives, and all good men hold them in contempt, at the least; but we have another class of enemies, who fill with apprehension good, and sensible, and even brave men. These are those who range themselves amongst Radical Reformers, but who tell you, at the same time, that they themselves wish to go much further, that they wish for a total change of the form of the Government, and the substance of the laws: that, in short, they are *republicans*. If you were to put them to the test, they would find it very difficult to tell you *why* they are such; but their ignorance does not remove the sting of the mischief; they cause our motives and intentions to be called in question, and, be you well assured, gentlemen, I beseech you to take this solemn assurance from me, that, if we leave in the minds of the middle class of this country, that we have lurking in our minds motives and intentions of this description, we shall never, by our exer-

tions, at all promote, but shall retard, and, perhaps, ruin, the cause of radical reform.

Therefore, gentlemen, I deem it an imperious duty imposed upon me to take this opportunity of suggesting to those gentlemen who shall be chosen to draw up this address, not only to state explicitly that which we wish to obtain, but, with all frankness and sincerity, to disavow and disclaim those things which we do not wish to obtain; for, I repeat it, and beg your indulgence while I exhort you to think seriously upon the matter, if we leave lurking in the minds of the middle class of this country, even a suspicion of our intentions to effect objects that go beyond a Radical Reform, we shall never have that class with us. I would beg leave to suggest an explicit declaration that we do not wish for any government other than that of King, Lords, and Commons. Real Commons, of course; but that we do not wish to see the king shorn of any of his just prerogatives, nor the Peers deprived of any of their just privileges; both of which, you will please to observe, would, if we had a real House of Commons, exist for the benefit of us all.

Besides, gentlemen, if we pretend, either by words or by implication, that this species of government of King, Lords, and Commons, is essentially bad, what proof do we give of our sincerity, and of our historical and political knowledge? We are continually asking to be restored to the happy state of our fathers; we are continually asking that England may be again what England has been; we boast, and most justly boast, of the laws of our country, of those institutions which were made for our protection; and can we be very sincere, then, if we say that this species of government is radically bad, when we know, and when all the world knows, that all these laws and institutions which have been so much-unjustly praised throughout the world, arose under a government of King, Lords, and Commons. Again we boast, and very justly, of our national character. It is not altogether a boast; for all candid and sensible foreigners allow, that in probity as to dealings, in industry, in ingenuity,

whether in the affairs of agriculture, manufactures, commerce, or arts, we excel all the world, and that we have thus excelled for numerous ages. Great are the abuses which at this day exist; great the fiscal oppressions; great the grindings of the poor; but these arise from well-known causes; causes which have proceeded in defiance, not with the sanction and from the nature of our political institutions, but in defiance of them, in abuse of them, and the existence of abuse implies the power of correction. Go to what country an Englishman will, he always hankers after home; and well he may; for here, and only here, with the exception of some parts of America, he sees the happy homes, the kind parents, the dutiful children, the good masters, the obedient servants and apprentices, with whom the country is filled. Now, Gentlemen, without exaggeration, without one tittle of vain boasting, this is the character of the people of England. It cannot then have been a very bad sort of government: it cannot have been a government radically and essentially bad, under which such a character has been formed; and we all know, at least all of us that have read beyond our primers and spelling books, that this has always been a government of King, Lords, and Commons.

Now, gentlemen, as to *republican* Government, I have always, since I first knew what it was, protested against it, and for a much better reason than that for which it is praised by those who profess their attachment to it. I know what it is, and I say, and I will prove to you, that, though it may not be equally bad with that of the dey of Algiers, it may be such, and sometimes is such, as every man of you who now do me the honour to listen to what I am saying, would, I am satisfied, perish rather than submit to in silence. I am not going to bring my proofs from the deeds of the Republicans of France, or those of Holland, or Venice, or other non-descript sort of governments and countries; but I am going to produce them from the United States of America itself; from a people who have the same identical laws that we have; and yet, as you will see, who

are obliged to submit to an administration of those laws to which a bayonet at every man's breast would not make an Englishman submit, without something in the shape of rebellion. We talk, gentlemen, of the *Government* of America, as if there were but *one*, consisting of a President, two houses of Congress, and Officers of state. That Government is merely to carry on the *foreign affairs* of the Union, and to regulate matters of Foreign Commerce. The Country is divided into about twenty *states*, each state having its chief magistrate under the name of Governor, and each having, also, its House of Representatives and its Senate. Here is the municipal Government of the country; these are the Governments whose laws and regulations effect men's property and lives: each differs from all the rest as to some of its regulations and modes of election; but, in all of them, the chief magistrate is elective, as well as the two Houses of Legislature; and, in all of them, the common law of England is the common law of the State, and here, it is curious to observe that, when the people cast off the English Government, and were about to form new constitutions in the several States, the great subject of their alarm was, that they should *lose the laws of England*; and, in every one of the States, the people bound their rulers by the first article of their Constitution in somewhat these words: "The laws of England, are the *birth-right of the people of this State*; and no act of this State shall ever be lawful that shall deprive "them of those laws." No small compliment, gentlemen, to the King, Lords, and Commons, and might very well serve to silence those who want to go further than Radical Reform.

There are then, gentlemen, about twenty distinct republics, in one of which I lived for about eight years. I do not compare it to the government of the Dey of Algiers, as I said before, but I declare it to be as infamous a tyranny as ever existed. I am speaking of the republic of Pennsylvania, a state containing, I believe, at this time more people than Scotland, and a country far sur-

passing Scotland in soil and resources. The chief magistrate or governor, is elective; and this is the source of the tyranny, as I shall presently show. The governor is elected for the term of three years; but he is re-eligible for two terms more; and, therefore, *may* be governor for nine years; and as he possesses all the powers of a sovereign, much more unlimited than our King does, and has, in proportion to the wealth of the state, an extent of patronage far surpassing that of our King, he makes such use of his power as to ensure his re-election; so that, in fact, when elected, he is elected for nine years. This elective quality in the chief magistracy (which is, you will observe, indispensable in a republic), naturally produces partialities of the worst description, and, in some cases, deeds which, if attempted by an English King, would, in the face of an army of five hundred thousand men, hurl that King from his throne. King James the Second was driven from the throne for dispensing with the execution of the laws. The paper which I hold in my hand forms the manuscript of part of a pamphlet published in Philadelphia, the author of which was Mr. Benjamin Davis, a bookseller of that city. There had been an election of a governor in the latter part of the year 1799, just before I quitted that state. In the next year, one William M'Allister, and John M'Allister, brothers, who had been mainly instrumental in the election of the governor, as far as related to Cumberland county, in which they resided, and who belonged to a very numerous family, which was able, on another occasion, to contribute largely towards the re-election of the governor: these two men committed a murder; "a barbarous and inhuman murder." In Pennsylvania they have what is called softened the law: they have divided murder into three degrees, first, second, and third. For the first degree, they hang, though none was ever yet hanged for it, *except some poor man*; some unfortunate Irishman, or some negro. The two M'Allisters were indicted for murder; every interest was made, every wheel put in motion, to

cause the conviction to be for *murder in the second degree*. The punishment for this degree of murder is ten years of solitary confinement in a cell nearly dark : the M'Allisters were convicted ; sentence was passed on them ; they were sent off to Philadelphia, to be put into the jail ; but long before they reached the city they were pardoned by the governor, and they returned back to Cumberland county in triumph, and to the great terror of all who had been instrumental in their prosecution. One EARLE, who had been an active agent in the election of the governor, had robbed the house of HARE and JONES, of Philadelphia : he stood committed for burglary : the governor pardoned him *before trial*. SOLOMON HAYES (another electioneering agent of the governor) was committed for robbing a landlord and his guests of many hundred dollars. A bundle of false keys was found on him : he was pardoned by the governor before trial. CHARLES BREECE, a very active partisan of the governor at his election, having forged a note of hand for one hundred dollars, in the name of THOMAS DARNEL, got it endorsed by Thomas Fisher, and discounted at the bank, was committed to jail, but was pardoned by the governor before trial. These are only mere instances ; and while we applaud the driving away of James the Second for dispensing with the law ; while we call him a tyrant, let us not be so unjust as to withhold our execration from this petty tyrant of Pennsylvania ; and let us not, with these facts before us, be foolish enough to think that an overturning of King, and of Lords, would tend to give us liberty and safety for our property and our lives. The state of Pennsylvania made the same bargain as the other republics with their new rulers : they also declared the laws of England to be their birthright : but this base and impudent tyrant took effectual means, as far as his immediate interests are concerned, to deprive them of the protection afforded by those laws.

Now, I do not say or insinuate, that all republics in America are of this description. I am far from thinking this. I thought myself as safe in the State of

New York as I think myself here ; and I believe that in that State, and in the four New England States, justice is administered with perfect integrity. But here is one republic, at any rate ; and that on as fair a spot of earth as America contains ; and inhabited, generally speaking, by as kind and virtuous a people as ever lived : but such have there been the effects of an elective chief magistrate ; and such I found them still to be when I visited that country about ten years ago ; but still worse than the tyranny itself, **THE PEOPLE BEAR IT PATIENTLY !** Scarcely a remonstrance is ever heard against these acts of hideous tyranny. The people of England have been called sordid and selfish ; adorers of wealth, and despisers of poverty ; accused of a want of public spirit. These accusations, Gentlemen, arise from unfounded pretensions to popular approbation and reward : they are the offspring of arrogant ambition, which vents its revenge for disappointment in these spleenetic and unjust effusions. The public spirit of the people of England never was surpassed by any people upon earth : it has less of selfishness about it than that of any other people ; and, unless debased by republican government, does any man believe that the people of England would have submitted to deeds like those of this Pennsylvanian tyrant ?

You will think it strange, gentlemen, when I say that I can prove to you, that we here in England have suffered, and still suffer, from the doctrines and practice of these despicable tyrants of Pennsylvania ; but such is the fact, the statement of which, however, must be preceded by some little explanation. There is in existence an Act of Parliament passed in the latter part of the year 1819, which subjects every writer, printer, or publisher, of what any justice of the peace may deem to be a libel, to the giving of bail, not only to appear to take his trial at the next assizes or term, but *to be of the peace and good behaviour in the meanwhile*. This was a monstrous innovation and hardening of our law. Even when the Attorney General filed his informations, *ex officio*, against

printers, publishers, and authors, *no bail* was ever required *until after conviction*. The party was free until he was convicted of the libel, a libel being not a breach of the peace, but something having a tendency to a breach of the peace; and thus was it decided by Lord Camden, when an attempt was made to hold Wilkes to bail previous to conviction, for one of the worst libels that ever was written and published in the world. However, this law was passed in the year 1819; and, it arose in this way: PARSON HAY, one of the Manchester magistrates, had thought proper, upon receiving information of a libel, to insist upon bail from the party, to appear to take his trial, and to be of the peace and good behaviour in the mean while. Sidmouth, in those high days of his, put forth a circular to the magistrates, telling them to act in the same way, and saying, that he had a sanction of the law-officers of the crown, who were then (if I recollect rightly), Sir C. Sheppard, and Sir William Garrow. Still, however, the nation grumbled at this: it was a monstrous stretching of the law: the people did not stomach it: the magistrates themselves did not like it: it was something new, and something manifestly tending greatly to abridge the liberty of the press. Gentlemen, you will be surprised to hear that that which Kings, Lords, and Commons had never thought of; that which hundreds upon hundreds of English Judges and Attorneys General had never dreamed of, had been found out in the year 1799, by a Chief Justice of the Republic of Pennsylvania, and imported into England as a neat piece of goods, nicely suited to the purposes of Parson Hay and Sidmouth. And, when the poor fellows at Manchester complained of this new and hitherto unheard-of law, they were told that it was impudence in them to complain, when this was the law of the free Republic of Pennsylvania. Thus was this law imported from a Republic; but, as English Judges might be scrupulous still, that cutter of the Gordian knot, an Act of Parliament was passed, in 1819, to make it law; which law I, while I have life, will never cease to endeavour to get repealed. But, even with this law in Eng-

land, none of us of the press live in that terror in which a printer lives in Pennsylvania. For, this is his situation: he may be bound over to take his trial for libel, and held in recognizances to be of the peace and good behaviour in the meanwhile. He may be tried and acquitted of the libel; the grand jury may *throw out the bill*; but, if he commit a breach of the peace or be of bad behaviour in the meanwhile, he may be called upon to pay the forfeited recognizances, though he had been held to bail on *a groundless charge!* When our bill was passed in 1819, the law-officers were asked whether the law would not admit of the construction of suing for forfeited recognizances in such a case. They explicitly answered, NO; but it is not thus in the tyrannical republic of Pennsylvania; for these bills have been thrown out in such a case, and the parties, though bound over upon a charge which was no crime at all, had been called upon for forfeited recognizances, and had been made to pay them to the utmost farthing, together with exaggerated costs of suit!

[This is so monstrous a thing, and I am asserting it at such a distance from the scene, that I will here challenge contradiction in rather a singular manner. Mr. Richard Rush, late Ambassador from America in this Country, and formerly *Attorney General* in the United States, is now, as I hear, in London, negotiating for a loan for carrying on an American railway. With regard to which railway, I wish my countrymen who may become speculators, good luck. Now, Mr. Richard Rush is a Philadelphian by birth; and I call upon him to defend, if he can, the character of the Government of his Republic; and which, he will be pleased to observe, he can do only by a flat and plain denial of the facts which I have stated.]

Gentlemen, *Special Juries* have been no favourites in England, but they have been and are the contrary. Doctor Johnson, before he was a pensioner, and that "slave of state" which, in his Dictionary, he defined a pensioner to

be, wrote a poem, in which was a couplet as follows :

" When glorious freedom circ'd Alfred's throne  
" And spies and special Juries were unknown."

These Special Juries, gentlemen, were created by an Act of King George the Second, under the pretence that common men were not competent to the trial of intricate cases of commerce, shipping, and the like, but, Attorneys General soon found out that common men were not competent judges of cases of libel, and other cases wherein the crown was concerned; though, which is curious enough, they were so hampered by that preciously good old law relative to high treason, that they were never able to get rid of the Common Juries there. However, the rich soon found the great use of Special Juries in their trials against the poor. Now, one would have thought that, when a people had rebelled in order to get rid of what they called the tyranny of the King of England, they would have taken care not to retain the worst of that King's laws. Their crafty new masters, in Pennsylvania, retain them every one; and this of Special Juries particularly; and, in that republic, they are made use of for purposes the most tyrannical. Our Judges have laid it down as a rule that, if the Attorney General put off the trial to another term; or, if it be put off from whatever cause, the prosecutor or plaintiff, or person praying for the Special Jury, shall not have, when he comes to trial, a *new* Special Jury; that if the twenty-four men be still alive, and be forthcoming, he may still have a Special Jury; but, if not, he shall have no Special Jury, or, at least, only such part of one as may appear. This was decided in the case of Mr. JAMES PERRY, who was defendant against the Attorney General in the year 1804 or 1805. The Government and the rich men manage it otherwise in Pennsylvania. By one means or another; by collusion with the Judges, or by some infamous tricks, they put trials off for term after term, sometimes for two or three years. Every term they strike a new Special Jury;

and when they get a Jury fit for their purpose, they pounce upon their prey!

[I call upon Mr. Richard Rush to deny this if he can. I was at Harrisburgh, where the legislature of Pennsylvania was sitting, and where the governor was residing, in 1818. In talking with a member of the legislature, whom I had known many years before, I said, " Well, I have lived ten years within the purlieus of the palace of St. James, and, in the whole of that time, I have never witnessed, nor heard of so much base and filthy political corruption, as I have witnessed in this miserable little town in the course of ten days." " Well then," said he, " you will now go home, I suppose, cured of your desire to get Parliamentary Reform." " On the contrary," said I, " I shall now be more anxious for it than ever, for fear that the want of it should get us into some general convulsion; and for fear that, out of that convulsion, there should come an infernal tyranny like yours."]

Such, gentlemen, is a specimen of republican government, from which may God protect the country that gave me birth. I have always been of opinion, since I first read a little of history, that our forefathers would have had a much better bargain of Charles the First, of the old humbled lion, than they had of the fresh and vigorous wolf, Cromwell. I do not like wolves; I do not like upstarts, who are always wolves. I do not like those who seek for confusion, that they may fatten on the spoil. I say, in the words of the old Norman proverb, " 'tis better for a city to perish, than to be governed by an upstart." With all due deference to the Whig liberals, I have always thought that the people of England would have had a better bargain of James the Second, when they had got him upon his knees, than they had of William, though he brought along with him, ready cut and dry, the Dutch project of funds, banks, and of those sweet debts, of which we are now enjoying the delectable taste. I have always been of opinion that the French would have had a better bargain of poor, indolent, and feast-loving Louis the

Sixteenth, than of Buonaparte, whose sword was so sharp, and who wore such very long spurs.

But, gentlemen, for ourselves, I am sure that we shall do well to ask for nothing, and to disavow every thing which does not belong to our own rights, leaving the King and the Lords just as they are with regard to all their lawful prerogatives and privileges. Our fathers were happy and free; England was the cradle of true liberty; our country was for ages great and renowned under this same form of government: I have just shown you what degrading tyranny is generated even under these same laws when the Chief Magistrate becomes elective, and, therefore, again I exhort you to cast from you the council of those who want something *more* than a radical reform. I know (and who has asserted it oftener?) that the aristocracy have used the people very ill; that they have treated them harshly, and, in some cases, cruelly; that they have taken from us our rights, and rejected our supplications with scorn. Still, however, is there any comparison between this aristocracy and the base and malignant tyrants of the republic of Pennsylvania? I know, I repeat, that the Lords have treated us harshly; that they have caressed the Jews and jobbers, their natural enemies, while they have oppressed the people, who, if they had but eyes to see it, are their natural and only allies. But, it is not in the form of the government that the mischief lies: it is not from the House of Lords that we receive our wrongs: that House has, on numerous occasions within my recollection, interposed between the people and the men of 'other place. Three instances occur to me at this moment: the House of Commons had actually passed a bill relative to a turnpike road at Kensington, which would have been very oppressive to the people of that village, and the preamble to which contained a direct and impudent lie. The House of Commons were petitioned to reject this bill; but upon the reading of the petition, Lord Lowther said, "I am sorry to say that "the petition comes *too late*, for the bill "is gone up to the other House, whither, "I hope however the petitioner will pur-

"sue it :" this was done, and the Lords, upon having the case fairly stated to them, and seeing the palpable lie in the preamble which had wholly escaped the notice of our representatives, instantly rejected the bill, and saved the people of Kensington, Fulham, and Chelsea, from a new, burdensome, and unjust tax upon their industry. Need I remind you, gentlemen, that it is to the Lords that we owe the rejection of that horrible bill, for selling the bodies of the poor for the benefit of the rich. This bill had passed through the House of our unreformed representatives, with a great deal less ceremony and boggling, than are usually observed in the case of a turnpike or canal bill; and it was finally passed with, I believe, only thirty-eight members in the House out of six hundred and fifty-eight of which that House consists, and who ought all to be present, especially upon an occasion like this. I know several country gentlemen, or rather gentlemen who have estates in the country, and whose avocations confine them a great part of their time to town. I know several such gentlemen, who, if this bill had been passed, said that they would go home to their several villages, call vestry meetings of the parishes, and put it upon record upon the parish books, that the parish never would act upon this bill. And, gentlemen, this would have been not only just and wise, but it would have been an act of self-defence; for, though in this crowded population of the metropolis, and these masses of poor-houses and hospitals, and prisons, the time of the decease of unfortunate people, and the places of their burial are so completely unknown to the relations of the deceased in many cases, that the bodies might have been sold, and smuggled away without exciting much popular indignation in the country, it would have been otherwise: there, the parties are all known to one another: there, parents would have seen their children sold by the overseers, to be hacked up like murderers. When an act is unequivocally good, no candid man, and, indeed, no just man will be disposed to question the motive; and though it is possible, barely

possible, that the petition against this bill, drawn up by me, and presented at my request by the Bishop of London; though it is possible that this petition might have had some effect on the minds of their Lordships, still, from the sentiments which they themselves expressed, even before this petition was presented, justifies the conclusion, that without any petition at all, they would have rejected the bill, with regard to which bill Lord Harewood made the observation, that he did not believe that the Parliament had the power to pass such a bill; for that if they had the power to sell the dead bodies of the people, they must surely have the power to sell their live bodies. This thought, which had never struck me, put the matter in so striking a light, and was so perfectly unanswerable, that the bill could not pass with such an observation upon it. The last instance that I shall take the liberty to mention, gentlemen, of the protection which the people have recently received from the House of Lords, is, their rejection of a bill for the enclosing of a forest called Waltham Chase, in Hampshire. This forest, which consists of fine grassy glades, and of equally fine plantations, or, rather, natural growth of oak timber, was about to be enclosed a little more than two years ago, for the benefit of the then Bishop, and a few greedy land-owners of the neighbourhood. The Bishop of Winchester is the lord of the manor, and the timber makes part of the riches of his see: but still the spot is public property: it belongs to the nation, being a royal forest, though attached to the see of Winchester. To gratify these greedy persons, all the young timber was to be swept down, though it consisted wholly of oak, and was standing within sixteen miles of the dock-yard at Portsmouth. This perpetual source of revenue was to be alienated from the crown and the public, to put into the pocket of the Bishop; and, which was a great deal worse than all the rest, upwards of a thousand cottagers were to be driven from the skirts of this forest, where many of them had been born and reared up in health and strength, and where their lives were rendered com-

paratively comfortable by the possession and the rearing of geese and cows, and by the profit of the honey almost invariably raised in their little gardens from those stalls of bees which it is their fashion to keep. From this beautiful and healthy spot, all these poor people were to be driven into the filthy outskirts of some crowded town or village; and this to gratify the greedy disposition of a handful of grasping men, each of whom had already got a great deal too much. This bill was strenuously opposed in the Committee of our faithful and unreformed representatives; but those representatives passed the bill at little less than full gallop. Mr. RICHARD HINXMAN, a sensible and spirited farmer, who lived and still lives near the borders of the chase, took the lead in this laudable opposition; and having been defeated by our faithful representatives, he, aided by another or two, pursued the mischievous measure to the Lords, who, having learnt the true nature of the case, rejected the bill, and thus protected the rights of the crown and the property of the public; and protected, also, the thousand poor people who would have been taken from happiness and plunged into misery by this odious bill. These poor people, as soon as they had the news of their protection, and of the source whence it had come, held a sort of festival on one of the finest glades of the forest, whence they proclaimed, in loud shouts, their victory over the greedy and grasping men who wanted to strip them of their all; and whence they also proclaimed their gratitude to the House of Lords.

I know that it will be said, and said truly, for I have said it and do say it myself, that monstrous are and have been our sufferings, arising from the conduct of this aristocracy. We all know that their families are fastened upon us in an infinite number of ways: we all know that the military and naval half-pay, which have been given to men with benefices in the Church, contrary to every principle of justice, and every maxim of law, has been, in fact, given to the aristocracy; it being just so much given to their relations or dependents. I have heard of a Bishop who died a

military half-pay officer; and I knew a man who was, at one and the same time, a half-pay Colonel in the army, Chairman of the Quarter Sessions of a County, and Rector or Vicar of three benefices in the Church. These are monstrous abuses; but the fault is not in the Lords; the fault is not in those who receive the money; for it is too true, that all men endeavour to get as much as they can. The fault is in those *who give them the money*, which they hold in trust for the use of the people. Give us such a reform as would make the Commons the real representatives of the people, and the lords and ladies, with all their titles and privileges, could do us not the smallest harm.

I disapprove as much, or, perhaps, more than any man in the kingdom, of the waste of public money in the pulling down of new palaces, and the building up of other new palaces, at the same time; I disapprove, and especially at a time like the present, of all the squanderings of royalty; but while I would endure even this in preference to the tyranny of the wolves of Pennsylvania, I can see, and every man of you must see, that these squanderings arise, not out of the nature of the kingly office; not out of the disposition of any one who fills that office; but wholly and solely from the want of the people being fully and fairly represented by those without whose consent one farthing of money could not be had wherewith to carry on squanderings of any description.

In conclusion, gentlemen, one word on the present situation of the country, with regard to its foreign relations. England has always held, until now, for many, many ages, a proud station in the world. She now stands silent, her arms folded, and her head hanging down, while she sees Russia grasping the friendly empire of Turkey, and sees France preparing to take a share of the spoil. The Duke of Wellington cannot be ignorant of the disgrace which this country now suffers; and it is impossible for him not to lament it most deeply; because no dishonour can fall upon the country without a part of it attaching to himself. He, doubtless, would have preserved Turkey, which furnished us, as every merchant here

knows, with our most steady and profitable trade; but, loaded with this debt and these establishments, all to be paid in this money of greatly increased value, the Duke of Wellington is unable to stir for the protection of her honour. He has been complimented for his silence with regard to his plans and intentions; but something else besides silence ought to be expected from a man who receives about thirty thousand pounds a-year. From such a man deeds are required by a people like the English, who are famed for having always felt more for the honour of their country than for their own private interests. There are men, such as I spoke of before, who are unworthy of popular encouragement or notice, who revile the people as selfish, and as caring for nothing but money; there are some such, to be sure; but less of them here, I thank God, than in any country in the world; and I do verily believe, that, even at this moment, when the general sufferings are so great, if the people were convinced that even further sacrifices were necessary to prevent the dishonour of the country, ninety-nine out of every hundred, would part with the shirts from their backs, in order to be able to make those further sacrifices. The people have thought of their interests; have endeavoured to preserve their interests; but the general and predominant feeling in England always has been, come what will, let England not be dishonoured.

I conclude by seconding the motion which will now, gentlemen, be put to you by the Chairman.

[After this speech, which, with all my endeavours to abbreviate, took me an hour and a half in the delivery, and of which I have pretended to give here nothing more than the substance, except with regard to the facts relative to the pretty republic of Pennsylvania; after the close of this speech, Mr. Daniel French rose, but the audience began to rise at the same time, remarking that it was past eleven o'clock. A great part of them were soon upon their legs, and getting out of the doors as fast as their crowded state would permit them. A group in the front of the little stage

remained sitting for a little while, till the avenues should become cleared. Mr. Daniel French, however, soon determined these to rise, also ; for, having said, by way of commentary on my statement relative to housebreakers and others having been pardoned in Pennsylvania *before trial*, that the like was done here, for that a certain illustrious personage, whom he named, had been *pardoned before trial* ; having said this, and having added, that he himself wished for *universal confusion*, and that he himself was a *republican*, and having, besides, called the Duke of Wellington a *bloodsucker* ; having said these things, the sitting group rose as one man, and turned their backs upon the orator, on whom I turned my back too, and walked out of the place. I hear that, while the last of the audience were retiring, a resolution was come to by those who remained on the platform, to *adjourn the discussion for a fortnight*. It gave me inexpressible satisfaction, not to hear the assertions and sentiments of Mr. Daniel French hissed, hooted, and reprobated ; but it did give me satisfaction which I cannot express, at hearing my sentiments and facts, relative to the path that we ought to pursue, received with universal and loud approbation. If I had wanted any thing to convince me of the good sense and soundness of the English people, I now had it. The assembly consisted, it is supposed, of two thousand persons at the least, while a thousand or two were compelled to go away for want of room even to admit them to stand. This assembly was the most miscellaneous that can possibly be conceived : it consisted of gentlemen, merchants, shop-keepers, artisans, mechanics ; and, in short, it was a multitude promiscuously composed of all the ranks constituting the population of this great city. If ever there were a fair appeal to public opinion, this was such an appeal ; and every one present will bear testimony to the complete unanimity of the people in approbation of the opinions and doctrines which I had the very great honour to be permitted to express and explain. But, though I think this an excellent mode of diffusing political knowledge ; and though I have

much more than reason to be proud of the manner in which my efforts in this way have been received, I cannot, and I will not, make myself a party to assertions and sentiments like those expressed by Mr. Daniel French, being convinced, as I had just told the meeting, that with sentiments of that description on our lips, we must do injury, in place of benefit, to the cause of reform. I lost no time, therefore, after I had heard these sentiments from one of the members of the Society, to write to Mr. Grady, their Secretary, requesting him to inform the Society that I had withdrawn my name from the list of its members ; and, accordingly, I have now ceased to belong to that Society, and I shall be present at its meetings no more, either as a speaker or hearer.]

#### ADVICE TO YOUNG MEN.

THE Fourth Number of this work is now published. The title is "Advice to "Young Men, and, *incidentally and with great diffidence*, to Young "Women, in the middle and higher "ranks of life." I have begun with the YOUTH, and shall go to the YOUNG MAN or the BACHELOR, talk the matter over with him as a LOVER, then consider him in the character of HUSBAND ; then as FATHER ; then as CITIZEN or SUBJECT ; though if he will be ruled by me, he will, if he can, contrive to exist in the former of these two capacities. Such will be the nature of my work ; or, rather, such will be the division of it. Each number will contain thirty pages of print ; will be covered by a wrapper which will have notices, advertisements, and the like, in the usual way. The work is intended to contain twelve Numbers, to be published on the first day of every month, and the price of each Number will be *Aixpence*. So that for six shillings, expended in one year of his life, I do believe that any Youth or Young Man may acquire that knowledge, which will enable him to pass the rest of his life with as little as possible of those troubles and inconveniences which arise from want of being

warned of danger in time. At any rate, I, who have passed safely through as many dangers as any man that ever lived, will give my young countrymen the means of acquiring all the knowledge relative to these matters, which my experience has given me.

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I cannot trust myself to offer an opinion upon the following works, for reasons which will suggest themselves to every reader, particularly, if he be the father of sons for whom he justly entertains the greatest affection. I shall, therefore, simply observe, that they all have had a very considerable sale; and that I wish them to have a sale, far surpassing, if possible, any thing written by myself.

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